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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0869
INFO RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 8393
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 0223
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY 4599
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI PRIORITY 4100
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 1293
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 1923
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1897
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 8179
RUEHNA/DEA HQS WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY
RUCNFB/FBI WASH DC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA PRIORITY

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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [KE](#) [UN](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: UP IN SMOKE: KENYA'S HISTORIC COCAINE HAUL FINALLY
DESTROYED

REF: A. NAIROBI 1473
[1](#)B. NAIROBI 1363

[1](#)1. (U) SUMMARY: Fifteen months after its initial seizure, Kenya's record haul of cocaine was successfully destroyed under joint Kenyan and international supervision on March 31. Despite repeated and unsupported allegations that it had been tampered with, preliminary verification and testing indicated that the 1.25 ton seizure remained intact while in Kenyan police custody. While the drugs' long-awaited destruction removes a contentious issue for Kenya and should be lauded as a success for Kenyan law enforcement authorities, the international traffickers ultimately responsible for bringing the drugs into Kenya have yet to be identified or brought to justice. Evidence suggesting that drug trafficking rings continue to operate in Kenya underscores that this destruction -- as huge a victory as it is -- is but part of a larger ongoing struggle against organized crime and international trafficking. U.S. DEA and UK counterparts' active participation in the verification and destruction process -- for which post and the Government of Kenya are extremely grateful -- also provides the basis now for expanded and closer counternarcotics cooperation. END SUMMARY.

Controversial Cocaine Finally Destroyed =====

[1](#)2. (U) Nairobi's Chief Magistrate Aggrey Muchelule, the presiding magistrate in the ongoing cocaine trafficking case (reftels), ordered on March 31 the immediate destruction of the 2500-pound cocaine seizure. The commencement of the incineration of the drugs took place under the watchful gaze of court officials, defendants in the ongoing drug case, law enforcement authorities, foreign dignitaries, and the domestic and international press on the same day. The international team of experts, comprised of Kenyan, U.S., UK, and UNODC experts, inspected and opened the sealed footlockers containing the 912 packets of cocaine. (NOTE: An additional 42 packets, 21 from each of the Nairobi and Malindi seizures, remain as evidence before the court in the ongoing trial. END NOTE.)

¶3. (U) Just before issuing the order to "push the button" to launch the incineration process, Muchelule asked the international team whether the substance they would burn that day is cocaine. Kenya's Deputy Government Chemist, Jane Okado, confirmed that the tests performed on the substance over the previous days confirmed the substance was cocaine. While Okado declined to definitively state that the substance in the foot lockers before the gathered crowd was in fact the same substance upon which tests were performed, the inference was clear. Gordon Adam, a UK team member, helpfully confirmed to the magistrate that the tamperproof seals placed on the containers by the UK at the conclusion of the verification process earlier in the week were indeed intact. And the destruction began in earnest just after 10 a.m.

¶4. (U) After several hours of continuous use at extreme temperatures, two explosions erupted from the larger of the two side-by-side medical incinerators being used on the grounds of the Kenyan Medical Research Institute (KEMRI). Several hours of repairs were required, prolonging the destruction exercise well beyond the anticipated mid-afternoon conclusion. Close to midnight, and shortly after the last packets were loaded into the incinerators, a tired if elated Magistrate Muchelule reconvened the court session on site and announced the destruction of the cocaine complete. After court adjourned, and clean-up was conducted, the international and Kenyan members of the team did not depart the scene until almost 2 a.m., Saturday, April 1.

¶5. (SBU) The long-awaited verification and destruction of the massive cocaine seizure concluded with preliminary results indicating that the controversial seizure remained intact, countering long-standing concerns that (all or part of) the

drugs may have been tampered with or stolen. Presumptive tests performed on 100 percent of the seizure revealed the presence of cocaine. Confirmation tests were then performed on a random 20 percent of the seizure, which definitively determined that the substance was in fact cocaine. GOK and UK chemists also performed purity tests on selected samples, while other samples were sent to the U.S. for DEA signature analysis to narrow, if possible, the origins of the cocaine. Once finally begun, the operation was largely successful due to the excellent technical cooperation among the international and Kenyan experts and government of Kenya officials. Within hours of beginning their work (on Sunday, March 26), the experts agreed to testing methodologies, protocols, and a cohesive plan of action. They then worked day and night to ensure the methods used were in line with all Kenyan legal requirements, in keeping with international best practices and to remove any doubts in the court of Kenyan public opinion as to what was actually destroyed.

More Blows Need to be Dealt to Traffickers

¶6. (SBU) But since this cocaine seizure was proven intact, where then is the other cocaine in Kenya coming from? There have been repeated seizures of small consignments (up to 5 kilos each) of cocaine at UK airports from Kenyan Airways flights -- so many that the airline has acquired its own drug-sniffing team of dogs and handlers. The street price of cocaine in Kenya has fallen dramatically; UK agents say the price has dropped from more than USD 20,000 per kilo to USD 2,000-4,000 per kilo in the past year in Mombasa. Kenyan religious and community leaders speak of dramatically increased domestic use rates of both heroin and cocaine in the past several years. Nor has the Kenyan Government yet produced a successful prosecution of anyone in connection to trafficking the shipment. Seven defendants charged in connection to the drugs were acquitted in late 2005. The six remaining defendants (George Stanley Wango, Estella Duminga, Angello Ricci, Railton Muthungu, David Mugo Kiragu, and Davis Gachago) facing trafficking charges related to the cocaine are to wind down their defense in coming days. And none of them have been connected in court to its importation from South America. One can only conclude that well-organized international traffickers remain in business.

17. (SBU) Muchelule rejected on March 4 the admission into evidence of a confidential letter from the state prosecutor to his then-superior (dated almost one year ago) indicating that the evidence was insufficient to convict Ms. Duminga, Mr. Ricci, and a third individual, Jivanali Thanki, of the trafficking charges. (While initially charged with the other six defendants, Thanki has since been acquitted.) The individuals behind the trafficking network or those who facilitated the transit of cocaine through Kenya have yet to be identified. COMMENT: To post's knowledge, prosecutors never entered into evidence any indication as to just where the drugs originated or the route taken before arriving in Kenya. While the successful destruction of the cocaine is indeed a major step in the right direction, this is no time for Kenya to rest on its laurels. Authorities should capitalize on this success to bring those behind the drug trafficking networks to justice. END COMMENT.

Thank You

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18. (U) Post wishes to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of the team of international experts, without whose help the long-awaited verification and disposal of the largest-ever cocaine seizure in Africa would never have been made possible. Their tireless efforts, expertise, creativity and patience produced a model for future inter-governmental cooperation. Post is deeply indebted to: Mark Bertsch, U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, Pretoria; David Morello, U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency; Enrique Pinero, U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency; Laura Jones, U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency; Mark Harding, U.K. Drug Liaison Officer, Nairobi; Gordon Adam,

U.K. Liaison Officer, HM Customs and Excise; William Folkard, U.K. Forensics Science Service; and, Carsten Hytell, Regional Representative (Nairobi), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. At post, representatives from the Regional Security Office, Political, Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation all played supporting roles in ensuring a successful outcome.
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